



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2016 with funding from
Wellcome Library

<https://archive.org/details/b28648791>

Sanitary Report
of the
Parish of Coldingham,
For the Year 1896. Drwick
Gentlemen,

In rural districts the time is fast approaching if it may not be said to have already arrived when the writing of the Annual Report has become the most irksome and burdensome part of the duty required to be discharged by the Medical Officer of Health. As the present condition and surroundings of the community improve better fed, better housed, better clothed, less worked, less worried, and there being signs of progress in all these respects in the district for which I am responsible, it cannot but be that disease must be a less frequent visitant; and is it too sanguine to anticipate that in the near future disease may be altogether banished, and Coldingham Parish proclaimed to be a perfect Hygeia. This may be looked on as a poetical fancy, but in truth it is not so, for to the watchful interested eyes of the Medical practitioners there are signs abroad which indicate that possibly very shortly it may be an accomplished fact. For some years the health of the parish has steadily improved, and this year the record has been beaten, for until the very end of the year when four cases of diphtheria from the two outposts of the parish occurred at Rentonbarns and Lunsdaine it might be said that the Parish was practically free from all

3

all forms of disease during the year, can it be that the fear of being cribbled and cabbined within the iron walls of the Hospital erected at the foot of Millerton brae has had a deterrent effect on the bacillus of infection and compelled it to fly our borders? If such should prove to be the case the cost of erection and maintenance of the Hospital will have been cheaply purchased, But it may be said the Registrars' returns do not bear out such favourable statements, Let us examine the returns and on closer examination we think it will be found that they abundantly support us in our contention, Throughout the Parish for the quarter ending in March the number of deaths was 16. This is a large mortality, larger than for some years, but on an examination into the causes of death it will be discovered that in only three instances was death due to acute disease, the remaining 13 being caused by Chronic ailments of some years duration, In the quarter ending the month of June 13 deaths were recorded, but here again one half of these were owing to causes wholly independent of locality or season, In the 7 deaths reported in the quarter ending September only one of these was due to acute disease and that in an individual debilitated through Chronic alcoholism, The last quarter is chargeable with 8 deaths, but here again the same principle will be found to hold good. It cannot therefore be affirmed that the health {

health of the Parish has been otherwise than very satisfactory during the year, indeed it may be said to have been ominously healthy for the poor Medical Officer.

X
Pulmonary affections exclusive of Consumption was the cause of death in instances but in only two was death due to primary disease of the Lungs. in the others the pulmonary affections supervened on some constitutional ailment or disease of the Heart of some years duration. There was only one death directly due to Heart disease, Four deaths resulted from disease of the Nervous System, One to disease of Kidneys and one to Cancer, Two to Accident. One from fracture of Skull and one from severe burn.

The Mortality list is this year memorable from the circumstance that it contains the names of 12 individuals whose collective ages amount to 986 years. One of them James Dodds died at Reston at the patriarchal age of 102 years. Two died at 90. one at 81 and the remaining 8 at 80, 80, 79, 78, 78, 78, 76 and 74 respectively.

Three Infantile deaths due to developmental diseases occurred during the year, and two from intestinal disease. One death was caused by Membranous Croup, and one by diphtheritic laryngitis, and these were the only cases of death due to acute infectious disease.

The Births during the year numbered 54. 27 males, and 27 females.

The Births and deaths may be tabulated according to the different months of the year as follows.

follows:-

	Births,			Deaths,		
	Male,	female,	Total,	Male,	female,	Total.
January	3	3	6	4	3	7
February	2	2	4	1	2	3
March	1	2	3	2	4	6
April	2	1	3	2	4	6
May	0	5	5	1	2	3
June	2	1	3	1	3	4
July	3	1	4	2	2	4
August	3	1	4	2	0	2
September	3	4	7	1	0	1
October	4	2	6	1	0	1
November	2	2	4	2	3	5
December	2	3	5	1	1	2
Total	27	27	54	20	24	44

After this brief summary of the health of the Parish during the year I shall now according to my usual custom proceed to give a more detailed account during the various months with a short statement of the weather.

January The first half of this month was Characterised by unusually mild genial weather, The average temperature being 39 degrees, Only on two occasions during that time did the thermometer fall to freezing point and that only for a few hours at night. The barometer registered 30 and 31 which is exceptionally high for this season. Pneumonia and Bronchitis prevailed pretty generally and two deaths resulted from these causes in the Seaward district of the Parish, During this month there are in ordinary years several deaths recorded from apoplexy in old people, but 2

but in consequence of the extremely mild nature of the weather there was a complete absence of such, Whooping Cough prevailed pretty generally during the month and in consequence the attendance at Cairnbank School having fallen from 20 to 5 it was deemed advisable to close it for a short period, Notwithstanding the extremely mild spring like weather which distinguished the month till its close, from the 15th till the 27th, Colds, bronchial and throat affections were common altho' of a mild type, In several sheltered places Snow drops, primroses, roses, and in some cases even tulips were seen in full bloom, and birds were building their nests, There was only one wet day during the month, and the winds which were light, blew chiefly from the South and West, and easterly winds were conspicuous by their absence.

February, Set in with mild, clear, almost summer weather, A bright sun and a clear moon, hanging in a cloudless sky delighted and cheered during the greater part of the first half of the month, In such Italian weather it could not but be that disease in all its forms was banished, and there was practically a clean bill of health, Whooping Cough it is true continued to spread and one or two cases were complicated in weakly children by Pneumonia and Bronchitic Seizures, but with these exceptions there was no sickness, and the Medical Officers might have been with no loss to the Community on holiday. On the 17th there was a change in the Character of 2

of the weather which continued till the end of the month, Frost of considerable intensity lasted for the next 10 or 11 days. This fall of temperature and change of the weather generally had little if any hurtful effect on the health of the Community which continued proof against all such alternations. Some few cases of tonsillitis occurred during the last few days of the month. The prevailing winds which however were mild throughout blew chiefly from the South and South east.

March.

Rare Meteorological notes have their own value but in a report professedly devoted to sanitary matters when they have no bearing and seem to exercise no influence on the health of the district they lose much of their importance and interest. But when disease in all its forms flies a neighbourhood, the Reporter is compelled to fall back on his weather settings. The month was ushered in by a fine bracing day with light South West winds. Mild settled weather continued till the 6th when a gale of considerable velocity from the South West veering round during the course of the day to the North West set in. Till the 11th of the month the weather continued to be fine, when there was a fall of snow. Wet boisterous weather with South east and South West gale prevailed till the 14th but from this date until the end of the month it continued dry with cold North east winds. There were a few chest complaints but with these exceptions the Z

the health of the district continued good during the entire month.

April,

The Plum tree blossomed on the 10th of the month, and the apple tree on the 19th. The swallow was first seen in Goldingham on the 20th. For a man whose duty it is to write about disease and its causes to be compelled to record such trivial facts in order that he may draw up a presentable Sanitary Report surely speaks volumes as to the health of the Parish during the month: but in the absence of aught else what has he to fall back upon? The sun shone for some weeks during the month with more than summer heat and brightness, and disease could find no habitation amongst us. It is true that Whooping Cough and Mumps, both of which by the way are notorious for their vitality in presence of the most adverse conditions continued to linger with us, and the first of these notwithstanding such favourable surroundings claimed two victims. The month may therefore be considered to have been practically free from all forms of disease during its entire course, and may therefore so far as the Parish of Goldingham is concerned be marked in red letters as a record month.

May,

The mild dry weather which characterised last month was continued into this. On several days during the month the thermometer registered as high as 80 degrees. The want of rain checked vegetation considerably. Whooping Cough }

cough continued to spread and several cases of it were complicated with Broncho-pneumonia due more however I believe to Constitutional peculiarity than to Seasonal changes. In the first week a case of Erysipelas was reported as occurring at Horsley. Towards the middle of the month it became dull, with heavy thunder clouds, considerable fall of temperature, cold, high North west winds and thick fogs. Over several parts of the Parish towards the end of the month there was almost an epidemic of a mild form of Jaundice. Slight showers of rain fell on the evenings of the 18th and 19th but with these exceptions the month was dry throughout.

June,

The first week was fine, dry and warm, with bright sunshine. Dense fogs prevailed till the 14th, and during this week a few gentle welcome showers of rain fell. From 20th to the end of the month there was bright, clear weather, mild southerly winds and great heat. No disease.

July,

Fine warm settled weather. No Meteorological or Medical Report. Two deaths from Consumption and one from Angina Pectoris occurred during the month, but these were quite independent of sanitary or seasonal influences.

August,

This month was throughout a summer month, and not until the 27th when we experienced a dry crisp bracing day did we have any little Autumn weather. Some mild cases of inflammation of the lungs occurred during the course of the month, 3

September,

Till the 12th inst. Cold, foggy unsettled weather but such weather as was more hurtful to the Crops exposed in the fields than to the health of the community. There were during the month 21 days wet throughout, four partially wet, and only 5 days in which harvest operations could be prosecuted from morning till night. The Crops were much damaged, much of it being blackened and springing. A Case of Diphtheria was reported from Butterdean on the 25th and Mumps prevailed at St. Abbs as an epidemic during the entire month, but as none of the cases required medical attendance this visitation cannot be deemed worthy of more than a passing notice.

October,

There was fine, settled, clear, bright weather, with cold South West winds during the first week of the month. From 8th to 13th there were strong gales from the North east, and heavy rainfalls. On the 15th St. Abbs School was closed in consequence of the continued prevalence of Mumps, the attendance having fallen to less than one half. Leaves falling very rapidly and by the 15th many Ash trees were wholly bare. From this date till the end of the month there was almost an uninterrupted succession of wet days and frosty nights. A few cases of Pneumonia and Bronchitis and continuance of Mumps are the only medical records of the month.

November,

The two first days of the month were very wet with cold North east winds. Bright

Sunshine and crisp frosty weather followed and continued through the first week, From 8th to 13th there was wet but mild weather, and during the remainder of the month there was almost a daily alternation of rain, frost, snow, and sleet, Towards the end of the month a fatal case of membranous croup occurred at Westside, The month closed with mild, dry, but at sometime frosty weather.

December, The month was very changeable throughout, and did not maintain its traditional reputation for frost and snow there being a very considerable rainfall during the month, Towards the end of the month it was unusually mild, the thermometer registering 57° 58° and even in one instance 60°. Surely a very unusual temperature for the season of the year. During the month four cases of Diphtheria were reported, two at Renton barrow and two at Unstaine, I have been unable to arrive at any certain data as to the origination of these cases, I have however a very strong conviction that these sporadic outbreaks of Diphtheria cannot always be traced to faulty sanitary circumstances but that in most if not in all of them the disease is either imported or contracted from some of the inferior animals, the Cow or the Cat, both of which have been already proved to be liable to the disease, In the first through the milk and in the latter by direct contact, There are matters however quite foreign to a Sanitary Report, Suffice it to say that the }

the water supply and drainage arrangements at both Rentonbarn and at Jamsdaine have been thoroughly examined into and overhauled and no infection can if it were at all possible for it to do so originate from these houses in the future, The use of Diphtheritic antitoxin has had, I believe, a most beneficial effect both as a prophylactic and curative agent in arresting the further spread and prevention of further deaths from the disease. My Services have not been required during the year for the remedying of any insanitary condition.

Building operations have continued to proceed apace during the year at St Peter's, Haddingham and Aeston, the amenity of the village of Caldnishaw is likely to be much improved through the purchase by Robert Fitzroy Bell Esq. of Templehall of the premises situated in the centre of the village and presently occupied by Mr. Wood as a stable, It is ^{well} understood contemplated carrying out some considerable structural changes, and thus certainly an eyesore, if not an insanitary state of matters of some years standing will be remedied.

The Bakeries - four in number - have been at stated intervals visited and carefully inspected, and all of them have on each occasion been found to be kept in a most satisfactory state.

The two Cowsheds connected with the dairies
in the village, as also several farmyards
from which it was known to me that
milk

Milk was sold to the Public were also periodically visited, and all of them in regard to their sanitary condition have to be favourably reported on. The Parochial Lodging house is at present fully occupied containing five inmates, and I am pleased to be able to report most favourably as to the kindness and attention bestowed upon them, and that the house continues to be as heretofore in every respect a model of cleanliness, and domestic comfort. From the foregoing report it will be observed that the year 1896, has from a Medical point of view been one of unusual, extreme depression, we live however by hope and to the last edge of it we naturally cling, and the expectation that the year upon which we have now entered may prove a more successful one, is the only buoy which will help to float us during its course, should it prove otherwise we can only trust and occasionally perhaps even fervently pray that some Philanthropist may arise to champion the rights, redress the wrongs, and assist in replenishing the almost empty Exchequer of the presently sorely depressed Medical profession in rural districts, I have the honour to be,

Gentlemen,

Your Most Obedient Servant,
Lamm Dougall M.D.
Medical Officer of Health
for the Parish of Goldingham.

